

Omeo, Swifts Creek, Ensay and Benambra Wild Dog Management Zone Work Plan 2023-2024

Wild Dog Management Responsibilities

A successful wild dog control program requires an integrated, strategic, and proactive approach where all land managers, community, and Government work together to protect livestock from the impacts of wild dogs through a cross-tenure approach. This plan is a result of community and government working together to reduce wild dog impacts on livestock.

Wild dogs are declared established pest animals under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CaLP Act) on all land tenures. All public and private landowners have a responsibility under the CaLP Act, to take all reasonable steps to prevent the spread of, and as far as possible eradicate, established pest animals, including wild dogs, on their land.

Wild dog control is implemented using all available methods and tools authorised for use in Victoria. These include baiting on tracks, trapping and shooting. Aerial baiting may be implemented within the six Australian Government approved sites.

In many locations, community and DEECA work collaboratively to undertake strategic 1080 poison programs on public and private land to protect neighbouring properties. When wild dogs attack livestock, DEECA's Wild Dog Controllers provide direct support and assistance to producers.

Wild Dog Control Techniques

There are a variety of lethal and non-lethal wild dog control techniques available to landholders. Information and advice on the use and application of each of these methods can be provided by DEECA Wild Dog Controllers and Community Vertebrate Pest Control Coordinators.

Lethal

Baiting with 1080 and PAPP bait products

In areas where baiting programs can be implemented, using 1080 and PAPP bait products is the most cost effective and strategic method of wild dog control. The use of 1080 and PAPP baits must comply with the product label and the Directions for Use. Information on this is available at www.agriculture.vic.gov.au.

Trapping

Trapping is an effective wild dog management tool when used by trained and experienced operators as part of an integrated control program. The use of traps must comply with the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* (POCTA) and its regulations.

Shooting

While shooting is the most target specific form of wild dog control, it does not provide broad scale, long term wild dog control; it is labour intensive and requires a high skill level. Shooting can be effective in the removal of a problem dog from an area or property; however, it is most effective when integrated with other control methods. The use of firearms to control wild dogs must conform to relevant firearm legislation.

Non-Lethal

Exclusion fencing

Well maintained electrified wild dog exclusion fences provide an effective 'first line of defence' against wild dog predation of livestock.

Livestock protection can be further enhanced when electrified wild dog exclusion fencing is backed up by lethal control methods such as trapping, poisoning, and shooting. An even higher level of protection can be achieved if adjoining landholders work together to build and maintain contiguous community electrified wild dog exclusion fences.

For further information refer to the *Wild Dog Exclusion Fencing: A Practical Guide for Woolgrowers* which is available at <https://www.wool.com>.

Property hygiene

The presence of carcasses may attract wild dogs onto your property and provide a plentiful food source, allowing wild dog populations to increase and remain in your area.

Stock, pest animals, deer and native animal carcasses should be buried or burnt to prevent wild dogs feeding on them.

Animal husbandry

Primary producers can reduce the stock loss at lambing by coordinating lambing times with their neighbours, ensuring that vulnerable lambs are exposed for the shortest possible time.

Small lambing paddocks close to the house should be used to allow easier monitoring and will reduce the chances of lambs being left unattended or mis-mothered.

Guardian animals

Some producers have successfully used trained guardian animals (e.g., Anatolian shepherds, Maremma sheep dogs) to protect their flocks from wild dog predation.

For further information refer to *Guardian Dogs – Best Practice Manual for the use of Livestock Guardian Dogs* which is available at www.pestsmart.org.au.

DEECA Wild Dog Management Plans

DEECA delivery of wild dog control, both pro-active and reactive, is guided by annual Wild Dog Management Zone (WDMZ) Work Plans, operational data and Wild Dog Controller knowledge and experience.

WDMZ workshops are held annually in wild dog affected communities and the discussions from these workshops and/or alternative means (e.g., digital media) input helps to inform how wild dog management takes place within each WDMZ on both private and public land.

A crucial component in developing the work plans is the collection and recording of wild dog incident reports, so it is vital that incidents are reported by landowners as accurately and as soon as practicable. Not only does this enable a timely response by a DEECA Wild Dog Controller, but it builds a picture of where wild dog activity is occurring to maximise the outcomes from control actions.

For further information refer to www.agriculture.vic.gov.au

Community Wild Dog Control Programs

Community wild dog control programs involve groups of private landowners in a local area taking part in coordinated wild dog control on private land. Coordinated control programs provide the opportunity to maximise the benefits of integrated baiting and trapping efforts conducted by private landowners to complement the works of DEECA for effective long term wild dog control. Participants in community wild dog control programs also have the opportunity to learn from one-another which techniques work best in their local area, and benefit from organised demonstrations and field days which include non-lethal control methods such as exclusion fencing and use of guardian animals.

For more information on how to become involved in a community wild dog control program, please contact your local Community Vertebrate Pest Control Coordinator.

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Planned Wild Dog Control

Proactive Control

- DEECA will implement strategic 1080 baiting programs on 287 kms of wild dog corridors and tracks on public land across the Omeo, Swifts Creek, Ensay and Benambra WDMZ.
- DEECA will implement proactive trapping across the WDMZ within the capacity of the Wild Dog Controller.

Reporting

Incident reports involving stock killed or maimed will be given priority over wild dogs reported seen or heard. Dependant on the capacity of the Wild Dog Controller, seen and heard reports may not receive an on-ground response, however the details of all incident reports are recorded and used for intelligence gathering to inform control activities.

Landholders who observe wild dog activity or experience a wild dog attack **must** phone their local Senior Wild Dog Controller (SWDC) to formally lodge an incident report. The SWDC will then assign the appropriate Wild Dog Controller for responding to the incident and follow-up communication.

If contact is not made directly with the SWDC, landholders need to leave a message and the SWDC will make a return phone call within 24hrs, excluding weekends.

Senior WDC	Localities	Contact No.
Anthony Websdale	Bairnsdale, Dargo, Omeo, Swift's Creek, Ensay, Benambra, Heyfield, Licola, Maffra	0408 896 720
Dwayne Needham	Gembrook, Noojee, Erica, Gelantipy, Buchan, Orbost, Cann River, Bonang, Bendoc, Tubbut, Deddick	0429 667 868

Note: to report any issues in relation to domestic dogs, please contact your local council office

Reactive Control – Our Service Agreement to Community

The DEECA Wild Dog Program response process for killed/maimed/harassed livestock, or where pets are attacked or people feel threatened, includes:

- A landholder contact within 24 hours by a Wild Dog Controller where required, to confirm incident reports involving stock maimed, killed or harassed or people/domestic animal interaction with wild dogs,
- Verification, within 72 hours of stock death due to wild dog attack (i.e., not fox or domestic dogs) and wild dog activity where current work demands allow.
- Contact with Local Shire Ranger if impacts are believed to be domestic dog related,
- Provision of advice to landholders on immediate actions to be taken on-farm to mitigate further losses/risk,
- Provision of advice to bushwalkers and other Public Land users who are concerned about wild dog activity,
- Implement control actions post risk review using reactive tools and techniques, with due consideration for any potential human or non-target species risks that may impact on the Wild Dog Controller's ability to manage wild dogs safely and effectively,
Be aware that it is possible that no on-ground control works can be performed on public and/or private land in the area due to local circumstances.
- Assessment of current wild dog control in the area on both public and private land and modify if required (see below):
- Seeking land manager (public land and private land) approvals should WD actions be a viable option. Consider road-closures, extra signage/Peri Urban signage, removing baits and traps over weekends and public holidays and the use trail cameras.

Reactive wild dog control services, if applicable, may be withdrawn 30 days or less after a livestock attack, however, the provision of advice and works in the surrounding region may continue.

We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices. We are committed to genuinely partner, and meaningfully engage, with Victoria's Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.

Omeo, Swifts Creek, Ensay and Benambra Wild Dog Management Zone Work Plan 2023-2024

Wild Dog Program	Targets
Wild Dog Controller(s)	2
Trap night capacity	6,000
Targeted ground baiting (km)	287

Land Type	Area (ha)
Public land	256,069
3km LPB	176,894
Private land	135,904

Wild Dog Management Zone (WDMZ)

2023-2024 Wild Dog Management Line

Targeted Ground Baiting. May also be trapped in reponse to wild dog incident reports.

May be trapped in response to wild dog incident reports. In rare situations may also be baited.

No baiting. May be trapped in response to wild dog incident reports.

Community Wild Dog Control (CWDC)

CWDC Group

Aerial Baiting

Baiting Transect

Public Land

Park and Reserve

State Forest

Other Public Land

Plantation

3km Livestock Protection Buffer (LPB)

Ensay CWDC	Target
Estimated Participants	7
Estimated Baits to be Supplied	300
Estimated Area Protected (ha)	4,500

Omeo and Benambra CWDC	Target
Estimated Participants	20
Estimated Baits to be Supplied	2,800
Estimated Area Protected (ha)	23,000

Swifts Creek CWDC	Target
Estimated Participants	10
Estimated Baits to be Supplied	1,100
Estimated Area Protected (ha)	8,500

